

MINUTES

**Special Meeting of the
MISSOURI VETERANS COMMISSION
Held, pursuant to notice
Friday, May 02, 2003 — 10:30 AM
1719 Southridge Drive, Jefferson City, MO**

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance
- B. Roll Call
In attendance: **Chairman, Carl Niewoehner, Member Bernadette Miller, Member Emmett Fairfax.**
- C. Guests and staff present.
Guests: **Dr. Peter Almenoff**, M.D., F.C.C.P., Acting Director for the VA Heartland Network; **Tom Granger**, AFSCME
Staff: **Ronald Taylor**, Executive Director; **Jill Talken**, Executive Secretary; **Anne Payne**, Superintendent of Homes; **Julie Miller**, Chief Accountant, **Hal Dulle**, Assistant Director
- D. Chairman Carl Niewoehner reported that he spoke to Governor Holden by telephone today and was assured by the Governor that he would do anything he could to fund the VCCITF in a bill this year.
- E. CARES Presentation- **Dr. Peter Almenoff**, M.D., F.C.C.P., Acting Director for the VA Heartland Network
Dr. Almenoff has been employed with the VA for 18 years and in the Kansas City area for 5 years. He specializes in Pulmonary Critical Care. Dr. Almenoff gave a brief history of VA and noted that in 1626 a law was passed that provided lifetime support for any soldier who returned home from battle with an injury. In 1930 the Veterans Administration was organized. He discussed the scope of academic affiliations and informed the Commissioners of the independent survey that found 82 out of 100 veterans were satisfied in the new VA system and 83 out of 100 rated satisfied in the pharmacy system. Dr. Almenoff stated that the VA Network Leadership Board consists of 7 counsels. 1) Quality & Performance Improvement 2) Strategic Management 3) Communication 4) Information Management 5) Workflow Development 6) Finance and Business 7) Clinical Practice

CARES – Outstanding quality of care and service for Veterans. CARES will allow improved access to care for Veterans with a higher degree of patient satisfaction.

Resolution of Planning Initiatives:

- Access
- Proximity
- Small Facility
- Workload Capacity
- Vacant Space

Note: These are initiatives, funding is not available at this time.

Dr. Almenoff explained that the CARES Project is currently being reviewed at VACO in Washington.

VISN Wide Enrollee Trends indicate: (FY02) 255,851;
(FY12) 346,508; (FY22) 316,558

The CARES Study is split into 3 markets: Eastern, Central and Western. Each market has developed its own planning initiatives.

Statistics shows VA patients receiving care are 65 or older: 45%; income \$25,000 or less: 74%; no health insurance: 31%

Category 8 projections did not affect the CARES initiatives.
By 2012 Veteran population will be down to 22 million with an increase to 6 million enrollees in VA Healthcare.

Strategic Policy Alternatives to Close Gap:

- Enrollment Actions
- Benefits
- Cost Sharing Proposals
- Efficiencies
- Access to Care
- Resource Requests

Decision to stop enrollment Category 8 will be reviewed every 6 months to 1 year.

Dr. Almenoff described the VA/DoD Contingency System. VA serves as primary back-up when DoD Medical Treatment Facilities are full.

Pharmaceutical Cache Program: A group of supplies containing medications and supplies locked and stored in case of a disaster.

The VA also has Decontamination Facilities located in 78 VA Medical Centers selected to implement the department's mass-casualty decontamination program.

Ron Taylor encourages people to attend VA hearings in July at Poplar Bluff concerning the CARES Program.

Chairman Niewoehner thanked Dr. Almenoff for his presentation.

Copies of the Rural Missouri and Today's Farmer Magazine were distributed to the Commissioners. Coupons have been returned to the Commission requesting information on the state's programs. The MVC ad will run in May, June, October and November publications.

Mr. Taylor reported that the toll free number has jumped in number of calls this week due to increase in VBATF activities.

Update of Bills:

Hal Dulle reported that the Governor's proposition is being talked about but the Commission has not seen any amendments at this time.

Chairman Niewoehner explained his position is focused on getting necessary funding and he plans to visit the Capitol on Tuesday, May 6th getting the message out to the legislators.

Mr. Taylor distributed a spreadsheet which indicates Federal Construction grants obligation if bill does not pass this year funding the VCCITF.

Mr. Taylor recommended to the Commissioners that the 5.3 million dollar renovation project at the Cape Girardeau Veterans Home action be delayed or wait to get federal funding at this time. The Commission agreed with his recommendation for delaying project.

Hal Dulle informed the Commissioners that SB 219, Senator Steelman's Korean War Medals Program bill passed the Senate and is now in the House. MVC will do the design of the medal if the bill passes. This bill will also allow the continuing of the WWII Medals Program and revising the eligibility requirements to allow the eldest child to request the medals if the spouse of the Veterans is deceased.

HB 72- Representative Luetkemeyer's bill regarding DD214 field with County Clerks Offices be closed records is dead but the proposal has been tacked to another bill.

Mr. Taylor distributed a draft of a press release regarding the St. Louis Veterans Home investigation. The press release will be distributed to St. Louis area stations and papers.

Chairman Niewoehner recommended everyone to read the article in the American Legion Magazine regarding Veterans Homes construction frozen due to CARES Project.

Mr. Taylor informed the Commission that a letter had been written to Representative Ransdall notifying him of the next Commission meeting to take place in the Ft. Leonard Wood- Rolla in late August.

Chairman Niewoehner informed the Commission if funding for the VCCITF does not pass an Emergency Commission meeting will be required following session.

Mr. Taylor reported the budget this year is still pending. MVC could lose about \$79,000 in Special Service funds. With all the switching of funds no money was lost out of the Homes budget this year.

Commissioner Miller reported attending meeting regarding Mandatory Funding for VA Healthcare. She distributed a handout containing information and fact sheet.

NEXT MEETING

Chairman Niewoehner announced the next Commission meeting will be announced at a later date.

With no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned.



Ronald L. Taylor, Secretary